

COMMUNITY OUTREACH GROUP - COG

Last Fall, the Contoocook United Methodist Church was exploring options for their building. As part of that process, town officials, school officials, safety officials, members of the various churches, and leaders from several organizations were invited to gather to brainstorm and discuss needs in the community. While the initial goal might have been to examine possibilities for greater use of the church facility, through the brainstorming, it became apparent that there are several underlying concerns shared by several officials and concerned citizens. The brainstorming ideas could be combined and categorized under the broad themes of Wellness, Mentoring, Transportation, and Communication.

Additional meetings were planned and the Community Outreach Group or COG was formed. The intent was to develop programs that would merge available resources while seeking additional means to address some of the needs expressed. The initiative is a volunteer-based program established in a manner that would avoid additional services through increased taxation. We have gathered information through a survey conducted in early November 2011, and through word of mouth. After reviewing the survey results and hearing more from several community members, COG members began developing improvement plans based upon the specific needs expressed.

In response to community feedback, the COG Communications Subcommittee and the staff of the Hopkinton Town Library have developed an online community events calendar housed on the library's website: www.hopkintontownlibrary.org. This will provide a centralized location for people to post community events, check schedules and learn about town activities. We encourage you to check out the calendar and email us at hopkintoncalendar@gmail.com if you want to let us know about an event to post on the calendar.

We are exploring the need for additional transportation services. These services might provide the opportunity for readily available transportation for any citizen who does not have access to a vehicle. These services could provide citizens with the ability to attend appointments, grocery shop, visit the bank or post office and even pay a visit to the library. We are also looking to find ways to reach out to the members of our community who are in need of a visit and perhaps some additional support at home.

We are organizing a training event for anyone interested in becoming a mentor to a child or teenager. There will be opportunities for working with home bound adults as well. These can be long term and/or short term relationships.

We are looking to develop programs which will be accessible year round and provide services to all ages in our community.

We will continue to communicate our progress to the community and seek your ideas as well. We are asking anyone who would like to participate, make a donation, or offer feedback to the community outreach effort to contact Jim Hershey at 848-0500 or email herish4bar@yahoo.com

Steering Committee Members: Rev. Kevin Nichol, Jim Hershey, Chief Steve Pecora, Sue Strickford, Corrine Lajoie, Jay Burgess, and Jackie Stock